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**First Assistant**  
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**Florida, General Problems**

**July 28, 1961**  
**PAR: jaj**

72-112642-1

We visited eleven counties in the State of Florida, and interviewed Negro leaders from two other Florida counties. We were unable to interview our contacts in only one of the counties we intended to visit.

Our initial contacts indicate that once the Negro gets to the registration office he is allowed to register. As you are undoubtedly aware, Florida has no tests and anyone twenty-one years of age and over can be registered. Naturally, this does not provide local registrars with many devices for discrimination except outright refusal to register. We were unable to discover an instance where such a refusal occurred. Rather, the restraints on Negro registration occur outside the courthouse. In five counties where Negro registration was very low, we found a high level of intimidation and fear. The fears vary from fear of economic reprisals among the tenant farmers and school teachers, to the fear of dramatic acts of violence, cross burnings, beatings, etc., among the rural population. As might be expected, we also found it very difficult to secure any information. However, based on our very limited first impressions, we concluded that the fear is probably justified but in some counties it may be self-perpetuating. In some counties we were unable to discover any recent acts of intimidation; past acts have indelibly stamped their mark of fear. Hence, Negroes have not tried to register in sufficient numbers in recent years to require white reaction.

The solution to the problem in Florida would appear to be two-fold. First, private Negro organizations should spur intensive and prolonged registration and

cc: Records ✓  
Chrono  
Attorney General  
Deputy Attorney General  
Putzel  
Trial File

voting drives in these counties: Gadsden, Jefferson, Flagler, and Union. (Lafayette and Liberty are counties of very high intimidation, but their small Negro population, 152 and 240 respectively, does not justify too intensive efforts at this time.) Second, we should continue to visit these counties; establish confidence towards us in our contacts, and file actions as soon as our information warrants such action. It is our estimate that most suits in Florida will be (b) type actions, but registration drives may result in discriminatory acts by the registrars or other state officials.

John Dear, First Assistant  
Civil Rights Division

September 8, 1961  
PAR:jaJ

Paul A. Renne and Richard E. Parsons,  
Attorneys, Civil Rights Division

Florida, General Survey

72-012  
G.A.R.

We revisited four counties in Florida, Liberty, Gadsden, Union and Jefferson. The present situation in each county and our conclusion as to what should be done is as follows:

1. Liberty County - This is a small county with only 240 Negroes eligible to register. At one time eleven were registered, but all were forced by white activities to take their names off the roll. There has been no attempt to register in the county since that time, 1956. We again contacted Mr. Johnny Jenkins who had seemed, on our first visit, most interested in registering again. He said that there had been some discussion since our last visit, but that they were all reluctant to make the attempt. He felt that they would not make any effort unless they had protection at the time of registration. We explained to him the limits of our authority, and he promised to continue discussing this matter with his people.

Conclusion: There is nothing that can be done at this time because of the lack of Negro registration activity. However, we should watch this county closely, as any Negro activity could very well result in white attempts to intimidate them once again.

2. Gadsden County - Approximately 350 Negroes registered in this county last year probably due to the publicity of the Civil Rights Commission investigation. Since that time there has been little activity. We interviewed three Negroes on this second trip, one of whom we had interviewed on our first visit. All seemed satisfied that the Negroes could register and vote freely. Since our first visit there had been a local election. Negroes registered and voted in this election with no apparent difficulty.

cc: Records ✓  
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**Conclusion:** Based on the poor record this county had prior to 1960 it does not seem likely that the white community would allow large numbers of Negroes to register and vote. However, the lack of activity makes any action by the whites unnecessary. Negro leaders believe that there will be another spurt in registration when the next general election occurs. There is nothing we can do at this time, but a well organized registration drive in this county should be initiated.

3. **Union County** - There are 1,082 Negroes in this county of which only three are registered. As we discovered on our first visit, the registration of these three Negroes in 1959 resulted in some adverse activity in the white community. Our interviews on this second trip disclosed the following: Mr. Lacy Moore, white, told at least two unregistered Negroes that they should tell one of the registered Negroes that she should not vote and that they, meaning the whites, would not allow Negroes to register and vote; Mr. Lacy Moore told Mrs. Allen, a registered Negro, that she should not vote; Mr. Lacy Moore told David Jenkins, the science teacher, that he should not try to register or vote; that Mr. Thomas, white retired railroad worker, told Mrs. Angie Franklin, registered Negro teacher, that her house might be burned if she voted; Mr. Welsh, white, told Mr. William Coleman, registered Negro, that he might be killed if he voted. The colored school principal, Mrs. Ruth Jenkins has also actively discouraged Negroes from registering. This activity probably is based on her fear of the white community, but it has been instrumental in holding back Negro registration. Also, the past history of this county, beating of a Negro who tried to register, makes these verbal threats more effective.

**Conclusion:** The activity of the whites, in particular that of Mr. Moore, has halted any attempts by Negroes to register. It would appear as if these activities violate 1971(b). Whether a suit is justified where the intimidation has been so limited is another question. We believe that such a suit would have a beneficial effect in the Negro community. If further efforts are made toward perfecting a suit in this county, it is suggested that two members from this office go into the county and secure affidavits before the whites are aware of our activities. The level of fear is so extreme that F.B.I. activity before we secure these affidavits might have a detrimental effect.

4. Jefferson County - This county has close to three thousand Negroes of voting age. About 324 are registered to vote. Our second visit to this county was concentrated in the area of the county around Lament. Our investigation disclosed that white activity in this area had discouraged Negro registration and voting. Only one Negro in this area voted in the general election in 1960. All the other registered Negroes failed to vote because of white threats. Mr. Gordon Hudson, white, told Mr. Robert Hall, registered Negro, that he should not go up to vote. A school teacher, Belle Clark, who we were not able to interview, was told that she would lose her job if she voted.

Conclusion: No effort is made to stop the Negro from registering, but they are then kept away from the voting booth. A records demand would be of value in this county. Although these records will show no discrimination they will give us the names of all the registered Negroes. From this we could instigate an F.B.I. investigation to determine the number of Negroes who voted, and, if they did not vote, the reasons for this failure. This activity in the county may have a beneficial effect on Negro registration and voting efforts in the county as well as develop the facts for a possible 1971(b) suit. Also, a broad approach such as outlined above will take the pressure off our individual informants, and may make subsequent interviews more helpful.

*Legal Council*

TO : Jerome K. Heilbron, Attorney  
Department of Justice

FROM : John M. Rosenberg  
Attorney  
Civil Rights Division

SUBJECT: *R* A Summary of Voting Discrimination in Georgia

January 3, 1963  
JMR:mhs

Primarily to familiarize myself with the work that has been done by the Department in Georgia in the past, I have reviewed the various applicable DJ files and Trial files. While most of the information is undoubtedly familiar to you, I am summarizing my study with respect to voting in this memo.

I have taken the liberty to categorize the counties into three groups, which might be looked at in terms of an order of importance for action and investigations for the coming year.

The figures on the top line next to the county name indicate the total county population, and the per cent non-white. The second line lists respectively the eligible white voting population and the number of registered white voters, followed by the same information for the Negro population. (Figures are from Civil Rights Commission Study, Atlanta Constitution, Southern Regional Council and Bureau of Census. In some cases they may not be up to date.) The DJ file number is also listed.

Since segregated voting is being handled separately by Mr. Putzel, it is not treated herein except in a few instances where it serves to exaggerate the poor conditions.

While no individual credits are mentioned, much of this material is only a summary of reports by you and other staff members. Where you have recommended further investigation, I have so indicated.

The attempt here has been to summarize, and will in most cases serve only as a reminder. Obviously the complete reports are at hand nearby in the Trial and DJ Files.

It should be noted for future references that there are a number of instances where a county DJ file does not have a copy of reports of interviews located in the Trial File. Thus, for background information on a particular county, both should be checked.

*N*

cc: Mr. Dear	Records
Mr. Putzel	Chrono
Mr. Norman	Trial File (Room 1140)

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In each of the following groups, counties are listed alphabetically by the judicial districts: Northern, Middle and Southern. (Geographically, they fairly well follow the "Black Belt" from northeast to southwest Georgia.)

GROUP A

Baker County	4,543	38.9
72-19M-533	1139/[1670]	1285/35

We are ready to file a 1971(a) complaint.

Terrell County	12,742	64.4
72-19M-911	3038/2810	4057/63

The Matthews case in January.

Webster County	3,247	63.9
72-19M-383	775/[934]	975.0

Records photographed May 16, 1960. This is a notorious county. We need to investigate for evidence of recent intimidation, and Negroes who have attempted to register.

Miller County	6,908	29.4
72-19M-483	3095/3357	946/6

Not one of the six Negroes who are registered has voted in recent years. It is generally understood that Negroes are not to be in town on Election Day, and the subject of voting is considered a taboo for discussion. No one has attempted to register in recent years.

Lincoln County	5,906	49.0
No D.J.	1794/[2437]	1336/3

Another county where no Negro has attempted to vote and where they are afraid to try. There seems to be no Negro leadership.

**GROUP B**

<b>Payette County</b>	<b>8,199</b>	<b>29.6</b>
<b>72-19-18</b>	<b>3585/3402</b>	<b>1190/25</b>
<b>72-19-32</b>		

In 1955 and in 1957 the Department considered instituting actions against the local voting and election officials under 18 U.S.C. 241 and 242 for blatant discriminatory practices. In both instances we finally acquiesced in the USA's recommendation not to prosecute, because of "ill feeling" that might be created, and the little likelihood of successful prosecution. The records were photographed and analyzed in 1960, but no pattern of discrimination could be established. Your investigation in 1961 revealed no evidence of overt intimidation, but since there are no more Negroes registered today than in 1958, it would seem that a more detailed look is warranted.

<b>Brooks County</b>	<b>15,292</b>	<b>48.8</b>
<b>72-19M-57</b>	<b>5059/4321</b>	<b>3711/695</b>

No evidence of overt intimidation, but you recommended a further look here, primarily because segregated voting has not been eliminated.

<b>Calhoun County</b>	<b>7,341</b>	<b>65.1</b>
<b>72-19M-59</b>	<b>1654/[1682]</b>	<b>2393/132</b>

This county borders Baker County, and various comments suggest that we investigate further.

<b>Clay County</b>	<b>4,551</b>	<b>62.3</b>
<b>72-19M-62</b>	<b>1130/1013</b>	<b>1441/94</b>

The Negroes who are registered here are primarily teachers. Apparently, a state of fear continues to exist among the others. You suggested further inquiry here.

<b>Clinch County</b>	<b>6,545</b>	<b>38.0</b>
<b>72-19M-63</b>	<b>2373/2429</b>	<b>1256/319</b>

One of the counties bordering Florida where economic conditions are poor. Negroes are

Frightened. Some evidence that both the 30-question and literacy tests were being required. Segregated voting. Appears to be a bad county and we should check further.

Crawford County	5,816	37.8
No D.J.	1596/1496	1611/135

Adjacent to Bibb County. You suggested further inquiry here, especially to determine if only the Negro leaders were being qualified.

Dougherty County	75,680	34.4
72-19M-49	28,897/10,815	14,163/2628

Possible records demand in view of suggested discriminatory practices during September primary election for city council in Albany.

Lee County	6,204	62.7
72-19M-52	1427/1281	1795/29
72-19M-104		

There seems to be no clear-cut evidence of discrimination, though we still have to analyze the records photographed in 1961. Further investigation seems warranted. According to Gordon Martin, the failure to renew a number of Negro teaching contracts last year could not be positively linked to these teachers' activities in voter registration.

Macon County	13,170	63.0
72-19M-51	3171/3024	4077/178

As of February 1962, it appeared that this county was living up to its agreement with Justice to eliminate discriminatory practices. We need to check again.

The records were photographed in 1961, but not analyzed.

Mitchell County	19,652	31.0
72-19M-71	6033/[7298]	4971/375

There has been practically no investigation here, and the figures above would alone seem to justify it.

<b>Seminole County</b>	<b>6,8025,302</b>	<b>38.4</b>
<b>72-19M-50</b>	<b>2648/2648/[3172]</b>	<b>1255/29</b>

According to your investigation, the practices of intimidation of recent ~~years~~ years have been eliminated, but we should ~~keep~~ keep checking here in view of the few Negroes ~~who~~ who are registered to vote.

The records of this county have been photographed.

<b>Stewart County</b>	<b>7371-7371</b>	<b>70.7</b>
<b>72-19M-75</b>	<b>1465/1465/[1555]</b>	<b>2681</b>

Most of the Negro school ~~teachers~~ teachers are registered. Poor economic conditions ~~are~~ responsible for lack of interest.

<b>Sumter County</b>	<b>24,6574,652</b>	<b>32.8</b>
<b>72-19M-40</b>	<b>7730/7730/5164</b>	<b>6710/483</b>

Your investigation showed ~~was~~ segregated voting to be the main difficulty. Mr. We were going to check further in 1961, after Mr. Fleming had advised that the Barnum Brothers ~~could~~ could give us a good account of the situation ~~in~~ in this county.

<b>Worth County</b>	<b>16,6516,682</b>	<b>48.2</b>
<b>No D.J.</b>	<b>5324/5324/[5855]</b>	<b>3776/296</b>

You have recommended an ~~in~~ investigation here. A low percentage of total ~~reg~~ registrants is Negro, and the voters list obviously needs to be purged.

<b>Telfair County</b>	<b>11,711,715</b>	<b>34.2</b>
<b>72-20-58</b>	<b>/ / 7389</b>	<b>/ 169</b>

Vote frauds in 1960 elections resulted in criminal sentences. Henry ~~Henry~~ Putzel feels the voting setup is still ~~corrupt~~ corrupt, but so far we have no evidence of ~~federal~~ federal violations.

<b>Wilkes County</b>	<b>10,5420,961</b>	<b>51.3</b>
<b>72-20-70</b>	<b>3621/3621/3364</b>	<b>3101/290</b>

This county has a bad history of economic coercion and other ~~pressures~~ pressures. In April of this year, a number of Negroes were apparently rejected for not "interpreting" the Constitution

✓ ✓

properly. However, your conversation with Mr. M. S. Brittain in May of this year indicated that conditions were greatly improved. Some 200 Negroes have registered this year. We were going to check further.

GROUP C

There are approximately 35 counties ~~was~~ where we have never instigated an investigation, or even interviewed local people, to see what the voting conditions are. To reduce this list to one which we might consider for immediate surveys, I have listed below those counties with large non-white populations, but whose percentage of Negro registrants (of total registrants) is less than eleven per cent.

	Total Population	% Negro	% Registered
Elbert	17,835	34.3	10.6
Harris	11,167	34.7	5.7
Morgan	10,280	47.9	5.6
Oglethorpe	7,926	44.9	6.3
Pulaski	8,204	43.4	7.2
Quitman	2,432	64.1	5.6
Taylor	8,311	48.3	10.6
Twiggs	7,935	60.1	8.9
Wilcox	7,905	33.4	7.0
Wilkinson	9,250	48.2	4.8
Burke	20,596	66.4	10.4
Jefferson	17,468	36.6	6.5
Johnson	8,048	33.2	7.7
McDuffie	12,687	42.4	5.8
Treutlen	5,874	33.1	1.7
Warren	7,360	62.6	9.6

The following counties are others where we have conducted interviews or investigations. In them no major problems are apparent from our records, or there are affirmative indications that conditions are quite good. Naturally, if travels bring us into these counties, it is contemplated that we would check again with the local people. (Summaries are available in my files.)

Fulton	72-19-44-44
Meriwether	72-19-63-63
Troup	72-19-44-64
Ben Hill	No DJ
Bibb	72-19M-33M-35
Butts	72-19M-30M-80
Chattahoochee	72-19M-60M-60

Colquitts	No DJ
Cook	72-19M-64
Crisp	72-19M-66
Decatur	72-19M-82
Early	72-19M-39
Echols	72-19M-55
Grady	72-19M-83
Lowndes	72-19M-69
Marion	72-19M-70
Muscogee	No DJ
Peach	72-19M-35
Randolph	72-19M-74
Bacon	72-20-65
Coffee	72-20-63
Effingham	72-20-71
Evans	72-20-66
Jeff Davis	72-20-67
Laurens	No DJ
Screven	72-20-72
Toombs	No DJ
Warren	72-20-73

#### CONCLUSION

This survey is skeletal, to say the least. However, I shall be glad, at your request, to prepare a detailed program for investigation, records demands, etc., for any or all of the proposed counties, and any others that you may have in mind.

Date?

## IDEAS FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDY IN ALABAMA AND LOUISIANA

The purpose of this study is to gather information which can be used as evidence in cases involving the right to vote without discrimination to prove that since about 1880 or so the public education provided for Negroes has been inferior to that provided for white persons, and that this is still true today. Here are a few suggestions about facts to be found for comparison purposes. I am sure you will have others which should be added to this.

1. Teachers salaries - Negro and white.
2. Teachers educational levels and degrees - Negro and white.
3. Teacher-pupil ratios - Negro and white.
4. Length of school terms - Negro and white.
5. Subjects taught at various levels - Negro and white.
6. Pupils per classroom - Negro and white.
7. Textbooks used - Negro and white.
8. Accreditation by universities of Negro and white high schools.
9. Librarian study facilities in Negro and white schools.
  - (a) Number, types and age of books in libraries.
10. School plants available - Negro and white.
  - (a) Consolidated vs. rural schools;
  - (b) At what point were high schools available for Negroes and whites with particular reference to number of high schools per school age population.

(I have been told by Negroes in some counties in Alabama that they only went to the 6th grade because when they were of the proper age there were no high schools for Negroes in the county.)

11. Physical facilities inside school.

- (a) Number of classrooms;
- (b) Lunch facilities;
- (c) Athletic facilities.

12. Overall condition of the schools -  
age and keep-up.

13. Transportation accommodations.

- (a) Buses available, particularly  
per student;
- (b) Distance traveled.

## INTERVIEW OUTLINE

### Introduction

The following is an outline of information to be sought during the interview of Negroes who have attempted to register to vote in Dallas County, Alabama since May 1, 1962. The purpose of this outline is to provide the interviewer with leads as to the specific type of information sought. The experiences of all interviewees is different and therefore various parts of the following outline will not be pertinent in most interviews. Facts will arise in other interviews which will require a more detailed and extensive questioning into certain aspects of the registration experience than is set forth in the outline. Effective interviewing is the product of good judgment.

The nature, order and extent of the questioning can only be determined by the interviewer and can not be predetermined. Thus, this outline should be used as a check list of subjects covered, not as a guide to the nature, order and extent of the questions asked during the interview.

Diagrams of the courthouse and blank copies of the application form should be used appropriately during the interview to avoid misunderstandings between the interviewer and the interviewee and to help refresh the interviewee's recollection.

It is advisable to first discuss the registration experiences with the interviewee and then take the notes for his statement by again covering the experiences with him.

Background information should be completed on the forms available for that information. The information relating to moral character (possible arrests, convictions, illegitimate children, cohabitation, etc.), is important in judging a person as a potential witness and should be obtained in a manner as not to offend the interviewee yet provide the necessary information.

Basic Information

A. Attempts to register to vote.

1. Prior to May 1, 1962.

a. Dates, places and results.

2. Since May 1, 1962.

a. Dates, places and results.

3. Registration or attempts to register in other counties or states.

a. Dates, places and results.

4. Poll tax payments.

B. Description of registration experiences.

(The following information should be sought for each attempt made by the interviewee to register since May 1, 1962. The interview should include those times when the interviewee filled out an application form and those times when he was unable to fill out a form but did go to the courthouse for that purpose.)

1. Experiences prior to entering the registrars' office.

a. Date of attempt.

b. Where was the registration conducted (i.e., at Courthouse or in precinct).

- c. Time of day interviewee left for registration office and time arrived at registration office.
- d. How and with whom interviewee went to the registration office.
- e. Number of people waiting to register.
  - (1) Race of persons waiting and names of persons waiting.
  - (2) Description of how persons waited (line, standing or sitting, where in courthouse or outside).
  - (3) Who else besides applicants were present around line outside registration office (officers in uniform, white men, persons with camera, Negro voter registration workers).
  - (4) How did people know they should wait in line. (Posted instructions, law officer telling people what to do, registrars making announcements.)
  - (5) How long did interviewee wait in line (eat at noon hour, able to use restroom facilities, how long stand or sit in chairs during wait).
- f. How were the people waiting to apply selected to go into the registrar's office.
  - (1) Did people just wait in line or was there a list they signed, numbered tag they obtained, etc. Were people informed what procedure was used and if so by whom and how.
  - (2) How did persons waiting know it was time for another applicant to enter. Did registrars, law officer or prior applicant announce next person should go in.
- g. What were registrar's doing while interviewee waited.

- 4 -
- (1) Was door to ~~registration~~ registration office open, and if so, what ~~did~~ did interviewee observe.
  - (2) Did registrars ~~come~~ come out while interviewee waited, and if ~~so~~ if so, how often, where did they go and ~~what~~ what did they appear to be doing.
  - (3) If interviewee ~~was~~ was there in morning before registrars ~~arrived~~ arrived, when did registrars arrive, what ~~did~~ did they first do or say to those waiting ~~there~~.
  - (4) What did registrars ~~do~~ do at lunch time. Did they close ~~office~~ office, and if so, what announcement did they ~~make~~ make, what did people do who were waiting ~~in~~ in line, when did the registrars return ~~and~~ and what did they then say or do.
  - (5) What did registrars ~~do~~ do when they closed down for the ~~day~~ day, what time was it; how many were still ~~waiting~~ waiting; had they earlier warned applicants ~~at~~ at end of line they would never ~~get~~ get to them; did they tell persons when to ~~return~~ to return next or make any provision to ~~take~~ take those persons first on the next ~~registration~~ registration day.

h. How did the interviewee know where to go in the courthouse to ~~register~~ register.

- (1) Is there a sign ~~showing~~ showing which office is the board of ~~registration~~ registration office.
- (2) Did the interviewee talk to anyone and ask them ~~where~~ where to register, if so, who, where and ~~what~~ what was nature of conversation.
- (3) Were there any ~~notices~~ notices about registration posted on the ~~door~~ door to the courthouse, or inside the ~~courthouse~~ courthouse, such as the door to the registrars' office.

2. Experiences inside the ~~registration~~ registration office.

- a. How did the interviewee learn that it was his turn to enter the registration office.
- b. Description of the registration office and the persons in the office including how many applicants (where and what doing), how many registrars (where and what doing), whether a lady secretary was in the office (where and what doing) and the physical set-up of chairs, tables, etc.
- c. Obtain a step by step description of the procedures experienced including all instructions, questions asked and other contacts. In obtaining the sequence of the procedures determine whether the interviewee:
  - (1) Was asked oral questions, and if so, when, where, by whom and with what response, their nature (i.e., age, address, arrests or convictions, occupation, employers, prior attempts to register, spouse's name, illegitimate children, etc.), and answers given by interviewee.
  - (2) Asked questions of another person, and if so, when, where, of whom, what was their nature (why previously rejected, what part of form to fill out, beat number, meaning of certain words or questions, how would hear if passed or rejected, etc.), and the responses to these questions.
  - (3) Was the interviewee required to take and/or sign an Oath on the form. If so, when, where and by whom was it administered, what instructions or information was given as to raising hand, what Oath meant, where to sign.
  - (4) Was the interviewee asked about what the Constitution meant, to explain anything about the state, federal or local government or officials. If so, when, where, by whom and what the interviewee's answer was.

- (5) Was the interviewee required to fill out or otherwise write anything other than the application form (application for registration, questionnaire and Oath). If so, when, where, by whom, what was the nature of the form and what it required, what did the interviewee write and what was done with it when the interviewee finished with it.
- (6) Was the interviewee given any instructions during the registration process. If so, when, where, by whom and what was their nature (what part of the form should be filled out, not to ask any questions or talk to anyone else, where to sit, what to do when finished filling out form, etc.).
- d. What did the interviewee observe with respect to the procedure other applicants went through.
- (1) If there was other applicants, who were they (including race), where did they sit.
- (2) Did they talk to another person while filling out their forms, and if so, to whom with what response, and what was the nature of their conversation.
- e. How long did it take the interviewee to fill out the application form and how long did it take the interviewee from the time he entered the registration office until he left the office.
- f. Was the interviewee told whether he was accepted or rejected or told how and when he would learn whether he was accepted or rejected. Did a registrar look over the application form when he turned it in, and if so did the registrar appear to check the answer or just glance at it. Did the registrar say anything about the form at this time.

- g. Were there any parts of the registration process (particularly any parts ~~of~~ of the application form) which were difficult or confusing or which the interviewee did not understand. If so what did the ~~interviewee~~ interviewee do about it. If he didn't ask ~~any~~ any questions, why not. If he did any ~~any~~ questions, what were they and what was the ~~result~~ results.
  - h. Was the interviewee treated politely, were any confusing, embarrassing or ~~in~~ impolite statements made by a registrar. ~~or~~.
  - i. What did the interviewee observe ~~while~~ outside the registration office when leaving ~~ing~~.
  - j. Has the interviewee ever received ~~ived~~ notice as to what action the Board of Registrar took on his application. If so, what ~~what~~ was the form of the notice, when was it ~~not~~ received, what does it say and what was ~~then~~ the action taken. If the notice is one of ~~ref~~ rejection what was the reason for the ~~rejection~~ rejection as stated on the notice. Has the ~~interviewee~~ interviewee discussed this notice with any ~~any~~ registrars or other officials. If so where, ~~when~~, when, with whom and what was the nature of the ~~disc~~ discussion.
3. Voter registration activity. ~~ity~~.
- a. How did the interviewee ~~know~~ know the days that application for ~~regi~~ registration could be made.
  - b. What prompted the ~~interviewee~~ interviewee to apply for registration ~~then~~ at this time.
  - c. Has the interviewee ~~attended~~ attended any voter registration meetings ~~in~~ in Selma or other places. If so, ~~when~~ where, when, with whom and what occurred ~~at~~ at these meetings.
  - d. Has the interviewee ever ~~attended~~ attended any voter registration ~~classes~~ classes and/or filled out any practice ~~with~~ application forms. If so, how many, ~~many~~, where, when and who gave the ~~instru~~ instructions.

e. Has the interviewee worked in the Negro voter registration drive. If so, when, where and what did he do (i.e., distribute leaflets, canvass for people who would apply for registration, help raise bond money for jailed pickets, etc.).

f. Has the interviewee ever talked to any white person about the interviewee's attempt to become a registered voter. If so, who was the white person, when and where did the conversation take place and what was the nature of the conversation.

(1) Has the interviewee ever discussed voter registration with his employer (particularly if the employer is a white person) and if so, when, where, and what was the nature of the conversation. Does the interviewee feel that the attempt to register has had any affect upon his employment, and if so, how and what facts indicate this.

(2) Does the interviewee know of any other Negroes who have had difficulty with their jobs, payment of bills, obtaining credit, or otherwise, because of their attempt to register to vote or because of participation in the voter registration drive. If so, who, what was the nature of the difficulty, when did it occur and what are the facts concerning it.

WVW:bn

FILE - 12  
72-33-37

Laurence E. Walsh, Deputy Attorney  
General

March 14, 1958

M. Wilson White, Assistant Attorney General,  
Civil Rights Division

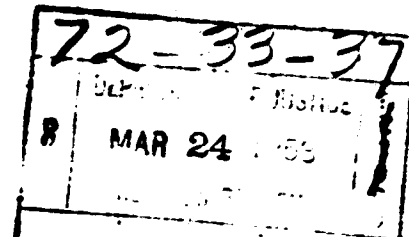
State subpoenas of FBI agents at Shreveport, Louisiana.

The local district attorney has announced his intention of subpoenaing before a local grand jury FBI agents who were conducting an official investigation in Webster Parish, Louisiana. The investigation being conducted by the FBI is under the Civil Rights Act of 1957 for deprivation of the right of franchise on account of race and is based upon 50 complaints. The charge which is apparently under investigation by the State is that the FBI agents intimidated the State registrar, and possibly other persons interviewed, in violation of State law.

I have no doubt that the State charges are completely baseless, and that the real purpose of the investigation is to endeavor to harass and embarrass the Department and particularly the FBI. At this stage we do not know whether the local district attorney or the judge are knowing parties to such an endeavor, or on the contrary, are acting in good faith in investigating complaints of local citizens. It is also, of course, impossible to say whether charges will be pressed against the agents through false or highly distorted testimony.

We are faced with the decision whether, when the subpoenas are served, we should at once ask the U.S. District Court to enjoin enforcement of compliance with the subpoenas. The complaint seeking such an injunction would allege that the state grand jury action would interfere with a federal investigation of a matter within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States; that the subpoenaed agents could not be called on to disclose any of the results of their investigation or any of its subject matter and that, therefore, the grand jury could not enter upon any inquiry as to these matters with these witnesses; and that in fact the subpoenas are intended only to hamper, impede and embarrass the actions of a law enforcement agency of the United States.

The answer to such complaint would no doubt allege that the subpoenas were issued not for any of such purposes, but were aimed at the investigation of charges of misconduct by the agents which would be alleged to be violation of State laws.



Presumably a hearing would be held to determine whether the subpoenas were in fact issued for investigation of state charges against the agents. It may further be assumed that the local district attorney would insist that they were so issued, and would undertake, if required, to make some showing that state charges had been lodged against the agents, which charges were to be investigated before the grand jury.

I feel that the decision whether or not to proceed with such an injunction complaint must be based primarily upon a question of policy, viz: what course is best adopted to counter what appears to be a deliberate attempt to cast discredit on federal enforcement procedures? I think the answer must be to choose the course which will bring out the truth and disclose the falsity of these charges as quickly as possible, and which will not at any time create the appearance that the Department of Justice is evading a full hearing of any charges made against its law enforcement officers.

There is some danger of creating such an appearance if the injunction procedure is used. The charge could, and might well be, advanced by the State that in seeking such an injunction the Department was holding FBI agents above the law, was claiming immunity from state investigation of any of their acts, however improper or illegal, and was attempting to conceal the facts. It would be particularly unfortunate if, in such an atmosphere, the court should order compliance with the subpoenas without hearing the testimony of the agents. Such a result could seriously affect the reputation of the Bureau. The damage could be repaired only after a public trial of the state charges.

On the other hand, if the hearing on the injunction was handled differently by the judge, the result could be just the opposite. If the court would permit the government to put the agents on the stand to describe their interviews with the alleged victims and to negate completely any charges of intimidation, the scheme would be shown up for what it is. To conduct the hearing in this manner, the court would have to be convinced that it should itself decide as a question of fact whether any reasonable grounds for state charges against the agents do in fact exist. If it should find the charges a sham and pretense, the effect would be salutary.

It is my recommendation that the injunction proceeding should not be brought unless the United States Attorney is able to obtain an informal ruling that the hearing would be conducted so that the government can bring out the full story.

I feel further that the law which would be applicable to the facts which have thus far been presented in this case falls short of insuring a successful injunction proceedings.

Although there is no doubt that a state criminal prosecution, and, therefore, a fortiori, state grand jury proceedings, may be enjoined by a federal court when it is shown that there is an interference with a federal function, Munt v. United States, 278 U.S. 96; United States v. Dulett, 15 F. Supp. 736 (W.D. Pa. 1936), nevertheless the facts as presently developed do not indicate that there would be such substantial interference with a federal function as to justify the extraordinary remedy.

Moreover, the federal agents at this stage are not defendants and at most are sought to be called as witnesses. The requirement of testimony might very well consume a minimal segment of their time and is certainly in keeping with their normal policy and procedure of testifying before state judicial bodies in the interest of the administration of justice.

In view of this state of the facts it would appear that the harm to the position of the United States would not be so substantial as to create the exceptional circumstances which must be present before a court of equity will enjoin a criminal prosecution. Stefanelli v. Minard, 342 U.S. 117. By the same rationale it likewise appears that the exceptional circumstances would be lacking which would justify enjoining a grand jury proceeding which in most instances is but the initial stage of a criminal prosecution.

The concept of exceptional circumstance is a matter of degree. Should the same facts be recast presenting a situation where numerous agents are needlessly subpoenaed and required to be absent from their normal federal duties for the purpose of testifying or being held in readiness to testify before such a state grand jury, a case of harassment of the federal government might be made out. In such circumstances the definite interference with a federal function would give rise to the irreparable injury which could motivate a court of equity to enjoin the state proceedings. At present, however, that is not this case.

If the injunction proceeding is not resorted to, the following principles would control:

1. In appearing before the grand jury, the agents should answer no questions as to any matters learned in the course of their investigation, nor disclose the names of any complainants or informants. With respect to what occurred at interviews with the alleged victims, the agents should testify fully as to their conduct at the interviews, but without disclosing the information received.

2. As to any questions not answered, the agents should respond in the manner prescribed by Executive Order 11219.

3. In the event of any attempt to cite an agent for contempt for not answering, the United States Attorney should move immediately to remove the contempt proceeding to the United States District Court under 28 U.S.C. 1442.

4. In the event of the return of a state indictment against an agent, the case should be removed immediately to the United States District Court under the above section.

There are two further considerations.

First. If it is decided to honor the subpoenas, consideration should be given to the issuance of substantially the following statement by the United States Attorney:

"Subpoenas have been issued for the appearance of Special Agents \_\_\_\_\_ before the (local) Grand Jury, to answer charges of alleged intimidation of witnesses whom they have interviewed in connection with an investigation directed by the United States Department of Justice. The Attorney General has authorized me to state that these subpoenas will be honored and that each Special Agent has been instructed to testify fully as to the conduct of every interview in question. This is in accordance with the settled policy of the Department of Justice to cause full investigation to be made of any allegation against its law enforcement officers, and to cooperate with local authorities if any such allegation relates to state law.

"The Special Agents have been further instructed not to disclose any matters learned by them in the course of their investigation, which is continuing."

Second. I think that the presence of the United States Attorney in person is required when this matter arises. A status check should be made before Mr. Wilson, the United States Attorney, arranges to leave his district for the United States Attorneys' Conference.

**Surke Marshall**  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

**John Deas**  
First Assistant

July 9, 1961

JDeas

72 - 012

**Investigations of possible racial discrimination  
in the voting process**

G. A. R.

On March 19, 1961, we met with the Attorney General and Mr. Courtney Evans of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to discuss problems in voting investigations in the South. At the meeting, the Attorney General instructed us to use the Federal Bureau of Investigation for extensive investigation of voting cases. During the meeting it was understood that there would be a large number of voting investigations requested.

Number of Investigations Thus Far Requested

Since our meeting with the Attorney General, we have requested investigations of possible racial discrimination in the voting process in thirty-four Southern counties. <sup>1/</sup> The attached appendix is a summary of the counties and the investigations. This report does not include the investigation of Mississippi primary election procedures and practices, nor does it include requests to the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning registration and voting records and post-decree investigations. It does not include "on the scene" requests for investigations made in preparing for trial of the Bullock County, Alabama, case.

<sup>1/</sup> Actually this represents 36 investigative requests, inasmuch as in two counties, East Carroll Parish, Louisiana, and St. Helena Parish, Louisiana, we have had two investigative requests. See attached summary.

cc: Attorney General  
Deputy Attorney General  
Mr. Putzel

Mr. Holloman  
Mr. Norman  
Mr. Owen

*Records*  
*Chemo*

### Time Consumed by Investigations

All but 3 of the 36 investigations were conducted on an expedited basis, that is, the requests asked that the investigations be conducted on an expedited basis. The average time between the date of the request and the date of receipt of the first report was 13 days. Some of the Bureau's work was very fast. (See Dallas County, Alabama, for example, a very extensive investigation, where the Bureau interviewed about 60 Negroes; 13 days elapsed between the date of the request and the date of receipt of the report.) This was a remarkably short period of time considering the nature and scope of the investigation.

### Number of Persons Interviewed

The 36 investigations involve interviews with 736 Negroes and 60 white persons (of these 494 Negroes and 72 white persons cooperated).

Thirty-one of the 36 requests contained a provision asking that the person interviewed be asked to furnish names of others similarly situated and that the latter be interviewed. However, seven of the 31 requests specified that a maximum number of such persons be interviewed. Where we have the names of only a few Negroes in a county and the registration records are unavailable, or being available, do not provide substantial information about registration practices, it is necessary to expand the interviews by this method.

### Character of Reports

The character of the reports has been determined largely by the character of the request, since the interviewing agents usually follow closely the specific requests. We have been using the technique of including in the requests for investigation a list of specific items of information which we believe should be elicited from the interviewees. This technique has been quite successful, though it has its disadvantages.

### Problems and Suggestions

1. One of our problems has been to determine how many persons should be interviewed in order to obtain

information sufficient to disclose whether or not there is a violation of section 1971(a) and the kind of practices used to discriminate. One device we have used where we have only a few names and where we do not have registration records or the records are inadequate is the expanded investigation, where the FBI is asked to obtain from specific persons the names of others who have tried to register or vote and interview them. Recently, to keep this type of investigation within bounds, I have put limits on this type of expanded investigation. I try to limit the investigation to between 30 and 40 Negroes and 25 whites.

2. Where a request is very specific and the interviewing agents confine the interview to those items requested, no disadvantages result. First, it is often impossible to predict and therefore to specify in a request all the types of practices to which Negroes may be subjected in a given county. In such cases the investigations might fail to bring out practices which were not specified in the request. Secondly, the requests may contain items, which, as the interview subsequently reveals, relate to practices which do not exist in a given county. Yet, by following the specific request, every person interviewed is asked about these practices which a few interviews reveal do not exist. For example, in Dallas County, Alabama, a request for one item related to whether or not the interviewee was required to have a voucher when he applied for registration. After a dozen or so interviews with persons who tried to register at different times, it became obvious that the voucher rule was not used in Dallas County. The same was true as to the constitutional reading and writing test. Yet, because our request included it, every interviewee (about 90) was asked about it.

3. The reports are not uniformly first-class. As I have not read all of them, it is difficult to generalize. Dallas County was excellent. Yazoo County, Mississippi, on the other hand, is not so good. I recall that in that county the interviewing agent did not press for names, dates and facts on intimidation and made no attempt to interview one Negro who apparently was the messenger from the whites to certain Negroes who were told to take their names off the rolls.

- 4 -

In the future I have instructed the attorneys to prepare a summary of the report and a follow-up request. This will tend to show weaknesses in the investigation procedures.

Letter to Mr. Hoover.

You have asked me to draft a letter to Mr. Hoover expressing your appreciation for their work. A draft is attached.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

During the past three months, the FBI has conducted extensive investigations in connection with certain of our voting cases which are pending in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

I am attaching a summary of these investigations so that you can see at a glance what has been done.

I want to thank you and Mr. Evans for this work. We are trying to be as efficient and effective as possible without unduly burdening the manpower of the FBI. If you have any suggestion as to how the work can be improved, or how we can make your job easier, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,

BURR MARSHALL  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

A L A B A M A

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE REQUESTED</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>EXPEDITED BASIS</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED AND MADE</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS EXPANDED</u>	<u>RESPONSIVE STATEMENTS</u>
<u>Autauga</u>	6/15/61	Pending	No	24+ N.	Pending	Pending
<u>Dallas</u>	3/17/61	3/30/61	Yes	22 N.	60 N.	80 N.
<u>Elmore</u>	6/21/61	Pending	No	9+ N.	Pending	Pending
<u>Montgomery</u>	4/20/61	5/2/61	Yes	46 N. 22 W.	31 N. 19 W.	27 N. 19 W.
<u>Perry</u>	5/24/61	6/13/61	Yes	10 N.	8 N.	10 N.
<u>Sumter</u>	6/14/61	Pending	Yes	55 N.	Pending	Pending

# LOUISIANA

COUNTY	DATE REQUESTED	DATE RECEIVED	EXPEDITED BASIS	INTERVIEWS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED AND MADE	INTERVIEWS EXPANDED	RESPONSIVE STATEMENTS
<u>Claiborne Parish</u>	6/20/61	Pending	No	22 N. 14 W.	Pending	Pending
<u>East Carroll Parish</u>	3/21/61	4/6/61	Yes	4 N.	10 N.	13 N.
<u>East Carroll Parish</u>	3/28/61	4/17/61	Yes	21 W.	1 W.	17 W.
<u>East Feliciana Parish</u>	5/3/61	5/18/61	Yes	50 N, 15 W,	25 N.	51 N. 14 W,
<u>Jackson Parish</u>	6/23/61	Pending	No	15 N, 15 W.	Pending	Pending
<u>St. Helena Parish</u>	3/29/61	4/13/61	Yes	12 N.	7 N.	17 N.
<u>St. Helena Parish</u>	5/16/61	6/1/61	Yes	16 N.	9 N.	20 N.

MISSISSIPPI

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE REQUESTED</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>EXPEDITED BASIS</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED AND MADE</u>		<u>INTERVIEWS EXPANDED</u>	<u>RESPONSIVE STATEMENTS</u>
<u>Carroll</u>	5/19/61	6/5/61	Yes	12 N.	10 N.	9 N.	19 N.
<u>Claiborne</u>	4/3/61	4/21/61	Yes	19 N.	19 N.	21 N.	38 N.
<u>Clarke</u>	4/3/61	4/24/61	Yes	6 N.	6 N.	4 N.	10 N.
<u>Copiah</u>	4/27/61	5/10/61	Yes	7 N.	7 N.	1 N.	5 N.
<u>Forrest</u>	4/3/61	4/21/61	No	42 N.	40 N.	33 N.	70 N.
<u>Grenada</u>	5/19/61	6/2/61	Yes	8 N.	8 N.	0	8 N.
<u>Holmes</u>	4/28/61	5/10/61	Yes	4 N.	4 N.	0	4 N.
<u>Jefferson Davis</u>	4/3/61	4/24/61	Yes	36 N. 2 W.	35 N. 2 W.	24 N.	59 N.

MISSISSIPPI

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE REQUESTED</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>EXPEDITED BASIS</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED AND MADE</u>		<u>INTERVIEWS EXPANDED</u>	<u>RESPONSIVE STATEMENTS</u>
<u>Lauderdale</u>	6/21/61	Pending	No	12 N.	Pending	Pending	Pending
<u>LeFlore</u>	4/28/61	5/15/61	Yes	11 N. 8 Unknown	14 N.	4 N.	16 N.
<u>Lowndes</u>	6/20/61	Pending	No	4 N.	Pending	Pending	Pending
<u>Madison</u>	4/4/61	4/21/61	Yes	6 N. 1 W.	6 N.	63 N. 1 W.	67 N. 1 W.
<u>Marshall</u>	4/26/61	5/11/61	Yes	12 N.	12 N.	13 N.	20 N.
<u>Panola</u>	4/26/61	5/11/61	Yes	9 N.	9 N.	4 N.	12 N.
<u>Pike</u>	5/19/61	6/2/61	Yes	7 N.	7 N.	12 N.	18 N.

MISSISSIPPI

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE REQUESTED</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>EXPEDITED BASIS</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED AND MADE</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS EXPANDED</u>	<u>RESPONSIVE STATEMENTS</u>
<u>Simpson</u>	5/1/61	5/10/61	Yes	19 N.	18 N.	9 N.
<u>Sunflower</u>	4/3/61	4/24/61	Yes	7 N.	6 N.	13 N.
<u>Tallahatchie</u>	5/1/61	5/11/61	Yes	9 N.	9 N.	0 N.
<u>Tunica</u>	5/25/61	6/5/61	Yes	5 N.	5 N.	3 N.
<u>Walthall</u>	4/3/61	4/24/61	Yes	10 N. 1 W.	10 N. 1 W.	3 N.
<u>Yazoo</u>	5/25/61	6/13/61	No	35 N.	28 N.	4 N. 1 W.
						31 N. 1 W.

T E N N E S S E E

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>DATE REQUESTED</u>	<u>DATE RECEIVED</u>	<u>EXPEDITED BASIS</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED AND MADE</u>	<u>INTERVIEWS EXPANDED</u>	<u>RESPONSIVE STATEMENTS</u>
<u>Payette</u>	4/12/61	4/25/61	Yes	2 N. 2 W.	0	1 N.
<u>Payette</u>	5/3/61	-	Yes	20 N. 14 W.	0	0
<u>Haywood</u>	5/3/61	5/16/61	Yes	21 N. 10 W.	10 W.	19 N. 20 W.

Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

April 4, 1961

John Doer  
Acting Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

72-41-20

Discrimination in Registration and Voting  
Jefferson Davis County, Mississippi  
-----

Listed below are the names of Negroes in Jefferson Davis County who have attempted to register to vote. Some have been successful. We do not have the addresses on some of them, but Mr. John C. Burnes, a farmer who lives approximately 3 miles north of Prentiss, will be able to help you locate the individuals. His house can be reached by going 3 miles north of Prentiss on Highway 13 and turning west on a dirt road and following the dirt road for about a mile. The Burnes farm is on the south side of the road. Please interview these persons:

John C. Burnes

James M. Holloway, At. Local Voting District  
Prentiss, Mississippi

Orson Holloway, Prentiss, Mississippi

Mabel M. Armstrong, Prentiss, Miss.

John H. Lewis, Prentiss, Miss.

John Harris Williams, Prentiss, Miss.

Castell Gray, Carson, Miss.

J. N. Armstrong, 3 miles east of Prentiss, Miss. ✓

Louis Warren Fusterling, Prentiss, Miss.

Juanita Fusterling, Prentiss, Miss. ✓

Johnny Hartsoe ✓

Jim Hartsoe ✓

John P. Burnes ✓

Scott Burnes ✓

Bob Owen

- 3 -

Johnny Goodlaw ✓

Mathew Herren ✓

Larkin Sims ✓

Irvia Lucas ✓

Gable Terrell ✓

Martin Sullivan ✓

Hallie Ward ✓

James Ward ✓

Beaulah Ross ✓

Rudolph Ward - Mt. Zion Community

James Ward - Mt. Zion Community

Fred White - Mt. Zion Community

Bailey Jones - Mt. Zion Community

Charlie Thompson, Route 2, Box 80 Prentiss, Miss.

Daniel Sims Ross, Route 2, Box 127, Prentiss, Miss.

Fred Ross, Route 2, Box 296, Prentiss, Miss.

Sam Phillips, Route 3, Box 122, Mt. Olive, Miss.

Dudley Lewis Hawthorne, Route 2, Box 11, Prentiss, Miss.

Dorothea Hawthorne, Route 2, Box 11, Prentiss, Miss.

Willie E. White, Route 2, Box 211, Prentiss, Miss.

Roscoe Otis - lives near Willie E. White.

✓ C. L. Powell - Carson, Mississippi (also obtain information on Mr. Powell's son's attempts to register and his present location.)

Certain of these people were previously interviewed in March, 1938. Re-interview is requested to bring the matter up to date and to obtain the specific information requested.

In addition to obtaining the usual background information including education, business or farming experiences, property ownership, military record, arrest record, obtain the following specific information:

a. Each time he attempted to register

1. Date or dates
2. Where he attempted to register
3. What other negroes were with him when he attempted to register.
4. Name of person or persons to whom he applied for registration. (Circuit clerk or deputy)
5. Full details of conversation with clerk.
6. Full details of any conversation with other white persons or officials when he attempted to register, such as the Sheriff or Deputy Sheriff.
7. What was required of him when he attempted to register, such as filling out the application forms, copying and interpreting a provision of the Constitution. Ascertain whether any part of the qualifying examination was oral. If he was required to copy and interpret a provision of the Constitution, ascertain what provision or what it was about and its length.
8. Whether he passed or failed. Include here any details of the conversation with the registrar.
9. Whether he received any assistance in filling out the form from the registrar and whether or not he requested such assistance.

10. Whether or not he has paid his poll tax regularly, if so, obtain all original poll tax receipts in his possession.
11. Whether any white person in the County has talked to him about registering, if so, who, when, and full details of the conversation.

Obtain from each person interviewed the names of other Negroes who have also attempted to register to vote. Interview each of these persons for full details.

Obtain from each person interviewed the names of any Negroes who have been reluctant to attempt to register because of a conversation with a white person in the community.

Interview Carl Meyers, white, who lives in Voting District 5 near Prentiss, Mississippi, and who is a registered voter for full details as to what transpired when he registered to vote, including the date, what assistance he was given either by the circuit clerk or by other persons when he attempted to register, and the length of time it took him to register. Obtain full information as to interviewee's educational background and whether interviewee can read and write.

Interview Garland Lane, a registered white voter in the County as to what transpired when he registered to vote, including the time it took him to register, and what assistance he received in completing the qualifying examination. Obtain full information as to interviewee's educational background and whether interviewee can read and write.

Kindly conduct this investigation on an expedited basis.

Typed 9/14/61

Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

SM:DLN:hlf  
72-1-18  
3656

Burke Marshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

Racial Discrimination Against Negroes  
in the Voter Registration Process in  
Jefferson County, Alabama.

We have received complaints from Negroes in Jefferson County indicating that their applications for voter registration have been denied because the applicants have been divorced. Apparently divorces on grounds such as abandonment and cruelty are considered to be evidence of bad moral character by the Board of Registrars. The fact of divorce does not appear on the registration application itself but is elicited by the Board by questioning the applicants.

Attached, as an appendix, is a list of 35 names of white citizens in Jefferson County who became registered voters between April 1960 and April 1961. These names have been selected at random from a list of 2037 white citizens who registered during that year. Please check these names against the name indexes of the divorce records in Jefferson County. If any of these names appear in the name indexes of the divorce records, please note the docket numbers and ascertain the date and grounds for the divorce, and whether the husband or wife was the plaintiff.

N  
Attachment

cc: Records  
Chrono  
Dear  
V&H Sec.  
Trial File, Rm. 1140  
USA, Bham, Ala.